

# White Fathers - White Sisters



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**Photograph Credits & Captions**

White Fathers - page 32.

White Sisters - pages 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26 & 27.

Vivant Unvers - pages 1, 5, 9, 11, 15 & 16-17.

George Smith WF - page 24.

Charles Green - page 29.

Front Cover - A smile from the Mendefera region.

Centre Spread - A view taken in the Adi-Keyh region, Eritrea, showing the beautiful highlands.

Back Cover - Children at Kifungo, Zaire.

**EDITORIAL**

The first section of the magazine this issue centres on Eritrea. It consists of three articles: 'Eritrea - A Peaceful Country at War' by Fr. Wolfgang Schoneche W.F., 'Eritrea - Evangelising a Changing Culture' from the AMECEA Documentation Service, and 'Eritrea - Some Facts and Figures' compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F. Together these short articles give a picture of life in Eritrea and how the Church is facing up to the challenges it finds. In 'Ten Days in Algeria' Sr. Marie McDonald W.S. shares extracts from the diary which she kept on a trip which she made to Algeria last year. We have mentioned Algeria before in the magazine and have touched on the situation there. Among other points Sr. Marie tells us of the changes which are taking place within the country and the hope that the peaceful situation will continue to give a better future for the people. In 'Home and Away' we take our usual trip to various parts of Africa. We hear how Fr. George Smith W.F. spent his first Sunday in a new Parish and we can read the open letter from 'Mothers of Congolese Families' to World Leaders asking for peace in their country. As this is the first issue of 2001 to have text every one involved with the magazine would like to wish all our readers a belated happy and peaceful New Year. Let us pray that this year will bring more peace to the whole of Africa.

In the article 'Star of the Sea', on page 22 of issue 353, the sub-heading in the layout suggests, mistakenly, that the young lady in the photograph is Dr. Ruheena Mendes, whereas it is really Dr. Jamila Horabin, as the footnote indicates. The Editor regrets any offence this may have given to the persons concerned.

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**To Help Our Missionary Work  
Please Remember Us In Your Will**

*Where there's a will, there's a way*

**White Fathers**

"I give to the **Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** the sum of ..... free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Father Provincial of the Society in Great Britain, who now resides at 42 Stormont Road, Highgate, London, N6 4NP, shall be a good discharge."

White Fathers' Registered Charity No. 233302

**White Sisters**

"I give to the **Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa (White Sisters)** the sum of ..... free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Sister Provincial of the Congregation in Great Britain, who now resides at 25 Waldemar Avenue, Ealing, London, W13 9PZ, shall be a good discharge."

White Sisters' Registered Charity No. 228983



# Eritrea - A Peaceful Country at War

By Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke W.F.

## ASMARA EPARCHY CELEBRATES ITS FIRST EVER SYNOD<sup>(1)</sup>

Waking up in the early morning in Asmara one has a strange sensation. The light shining through the window seems purer and brighter than anywhere else. Is it the altitude of 2,200 metres or the absence of pollution? Not only the brilliance of the sun is unusual. There is an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity about the town. Traffic moves at a slow pace and people feel so secure that they hardly lock their cars or houses. Compared with the violence of most African cities, Eritrea looks a lost paradise.

But appearances are deceptive. The country is once again on the brink of war. If you see only elderly people and schoolchildren in town, it is because everybody else has been recruited into the military and is waiting on the front-line for the third round of fighting in a war that is hard to understand. Ten years earlier the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), in spite of ideological differences, joined together to overthrow the communist regime of Menghistu.

After a referendum Eritrea gained independence, and both countries cooperated in a remarkable effort to rebuild their economies after thirty years of civil war. The people of Tigray and Eritrea share the same language and culture. The Presidents of both countries are related through family ties. So why fight? Officially, it is a border dispute. Eritrea considers the old Italian colonial borders as binding. But much of the disputed areas were always administered by Ethiopia and the local population consider themselves as Ethiopians. Both countries accuse each other to have started the

conflict. Eritrea started large scale military action, but accuses Ethiopia to have provoked the conflict. In June, 1999, the Ethiopian army regained some territory but at a staggering cost of human life. Could international arbitration not settle a border dispute? Eritrea claims that more is at stake than borders. They believe the people of Tigray who presently control power in Addis Ababa want to create a 'Greater Tigray', incorporating parts of Eritrea, and gain access to the port of Assab. And so a border conflict has escalated in a prolonged trench war. Eritrea cannot afford to keep its whole workforce on the frontline for ever. But should the fighting resume a whole generation of young people may never return home.

## A REMARKABLE RECOVERY

The war is all the more tragic, as both countries had engaged in an impressive development programme. Contrary to most African countries, Eritrea had heavily invested in improving its infra-structure. Roads have no potholes, telephones actually work and the barren hills are being systematically reforested. There have been great investments in agriculture to improve food sufficiency. Massawa, the picturesque Red Sea port is being rebuilt. All gives the impression of a Government that is trying to develop their people rather than filling their pockets. Most remarkably, Eritreans want to do it by themselves and have refused to submit to IMF and World Bank conditions, which have wrought so much havoc elsewhere.

## THE DOWNSIDE

But all is not glitter and glory. One cannot help feeling that the EPLF has not quite shaken off its socialist past. As for guerilla movements the world over, Marxism-Leninism provided

the ideology and the strategies during the successful liberation struggle. The Communist rhetoric is gone, but totalitarian attitudes persist, visible in an excessive desire to control everything, including people's minds. There is only one Government T.V. and Radio and editors of private papers have to be careful what they write.

Ominous was a Government request that the Catholic Church hand over its twenty-five schools and thirty-five dispensaries, which was not carried out as war broke out. Equally disturbing is a surprise announcement, never put into writing, to stop all religious teaching in schools, although an ecumenical syllabus had been agreed upon earlier.

One explanation why the Government wants to keep religion on a short leash is the fear of 'Islamic Fundamentalism'. After independence Eritrea was infiltrated by Sudanese and Iranian 'Fundamentalists' of the violent breed. The Government reacted swiftly and decisively, arrested them and cut diplomatic ties with Khartoum. Although diplomatic relations have been restored

recently, fear remains that religious radicalism could undermine the efforts of nation-building in a country that is half Christian and half Muslim. But some measures to keep religion out of public life clearly infringe on fundamental human rights, like preventing soldiers to have access to religious services or refusing fallen freedom fighters to be buried according to their faith.

## INVASION OF THE GLOBAL CULTURE

More challenging than any political, nationalistic indoctrination of the youth is the growing influence of the media culture. Videos of all sorts are available everywhere and Eritrea will be connected to the internet this year. Some service providers explicitly target the youth, which will be flooded with the best and the

worst of Western media culture. It already shows strongly in their way of dressing and their choice of music. It also reflects on their religious practise. While most remain rooted in their faith, the younger generation find the traditional Gheéz<sup>(2)</sup> rite liturgies too long and ask for Masses in Tigrinya<sup>(3)</sup> where they can sing new songs to the accompaniment of a keyboard. Many are also strongly attracted to Charismatic forms of prayer and influenced by the very active Pentecostal churches. All these changes call for an open discussion to look for appropriate pastoral solutions.

## A SYNOD UNDER THREAT OF WAR

It was a courageous decision by the Eparch of Asmara, Abune Zacharia, to hold the first Synod

(1) An Eparchy is the equivalent of a Diocese.

(2) Gheéz and (3) Tigrinya are languages - see the 'Facts and Figures' on page 12.

Gheéz is the liturgical and literary language

Picture Above: part of a procession in the Orthodox Cathedral, Asmara



ever in the history of the Eparchy at a time when the menace of renewed fighting seems imminent. After two years of preparation with questionnaires and 'mini-Synods' in the parishes, some eighty-five delegates, a third of them lay people, met for six days to discuss how the Church could respond to these profound changes in society. Liturgical change was one of the thorny questions. In a spirit of ecumenism the tiny Catholic Church does not want to move too far away from the Orthodox Church. Yet if the Church does not want to lose the youth, it has to give room to new liturgical expressions and adapt some rites to modern urban conditions of life.

Traditionally, the young were initiated into the faith through the liturgy. How to transmit a more personally reflected Biblical faith in a

new secularised setting is one of the great challenges to the Church. A catechetical centre and other diocesan structures will be set up to study different pastoral challenges. As is the case in most Churches in Africa, the Eparchy is still heavily dependent on outside funding, a heritage of the missionary past. Financial self-reliance is as urgent as it is difficult but not impossible. The Orthodox Church is able to run her own structures and builds beautiful new churches with local contributions, even if it takes thirty years to realise the projects.

How to evangelise with courage and creativity a new secular culture without losing the depth of faith and the riches of tradition, is a challenge, not only for Eritrea, but for the whole Church at the start of this third millennium.

## Eritrea - Evangelising a Changing Culture

ብንብረት ንጉዳዝ  
ብእምነት ንመስከር  
ብትግሃት ንሰራሕ  
ብከርሰቶሰ ንመራሕ

Let us Walk in Unity

Let us Witness with Faith

Let us Work with Determination

Let us Be Led by Christ

### THE FIRST SYNOD OF THE ASMARA EPARCHY

Asmara seems one of the most peaceful towns on the continent. People hardly lock their houses and cars. Few people walk around and the traffic moves slowly. But these appearances are deceptive. If only schoolchildren and elderly people are on the streets, it is because all able-bodied men and most young girls and women are on the war front waiting for a third round of fighting in the war with Ethiopia. It is a sign of great courage that in such circumstances the Eparchy of Asmara decided to go ahead with its first Synod in its 70 years of history,

called in the Oriental Rite (4), Eparchial Assembly. Some 86 delegates, one third of them lay people, gathered in Decomhare around their Eparch, Abune Zacharias Yahannes, for a week to work out a pastoral plan for the next five years. The Synod was prepared over a long period by the pastoral co-ordinator Fr. Menghsteab and a strong Synod committee. 'Mini-Synods' were held in all bigger parishes, and with the youth and other groups. Based on the teaching of the Vatican Council and the African Synod and the contribution of consultations, the pastoral team proposed a basic text to be amended and

approved by the Synod assembly. AMECEA Pastoral Department (5) was invited to be present at the Synod and Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke reports on the cultural and social background and some of the decisions taken to respond to the challenges.

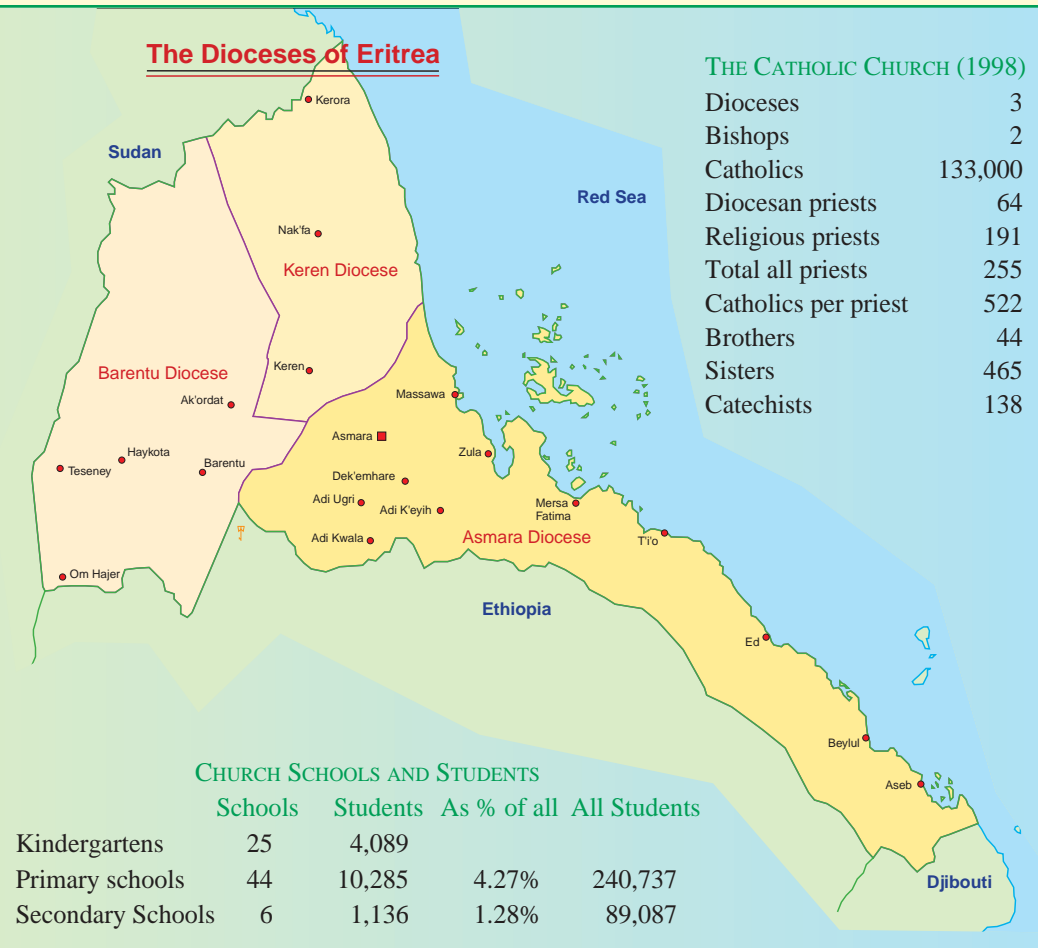
### THE EPARCHY OF ASMARA AS A UNITED FAMILY

This was the theme of the Synod and its main aim. Inspired by the ideal of the African Synod to see the Church as a family, the Synod makes the participants realise that the challenges posed by the situation in their countries can only

be met when clergy, religious and laity work together. The Synod itself was a living experience of how fruitful a true dialogue can be.

### INCULTURATION: EVANGELISING A CHANGING CULTURE

Christianity in Eritrea and Ethiopia dates from the fourth century and is the oldest and most inculturated on the continent. Christian thought has penetrated the language and the daily life of the people. But thirty years of liberation war, the influence of the thousands of Eritreans returning from exile abroad and the radically



Above is the Moto of the Synod (4) The Oriental Rite in this sense is the Catholic Church (5) AMECEA = AMECEA is the 'Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa'. It consists of the Episcopal Conferences of Eritrea (1991), Ethiopia (1979), Kenya (1961), Malawi (1961),

Sudan (1979), Tanzania (1961), Uganda (1961) and Zambia (1961). The Episcopal Conferences of the Seychelles (1979) and Somalia (1995) are Affiliated Members. Map Above: The Dioceses (Eparchy) of Eritrea



secular stand of the present Government is creating a new mentality.

It is estimated that by now 10-15% of the population has no longer any concern for religion while another 10% are thoroughly westernised. The Government has recently taken out religious instruction from schools and instils its own brand of nationalistic and secular ideology into the youth during summer camps and military service. And so one of the key questions was: 'how can the Church continue to evangelise a new generation and make it feel at home in the Church?' Some of the resolutions taken were:

- \* To start a youth association in each parish
- \* To make efforts to revitalise the family
- \* To have a full time chaplain to the university.

#### LITURGICAL ADAPTATION

The long liturgies in the Gheéz language are deeply moving and much more participatory than Latin rite celebrations. But the young generation is changing fast. They no longer feel at ease to pray in a language they do not understand and prefer to sing modern hymns in Tigrinya to the rhythms of an electronic keyboard. In fact, many parishes are already using Tigrinya and more texts are being translated. They are also influenced by the different style of praying practised in the Charismatic Movement and in the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. The great discussion of the Synod was how to preserve the richness and beauty of the Gheéz tradition and yet create a space for new liturgical expression to grow. The clergy, particularly the married priests who have come from the Orthodox Church, pleaded to teach the youth the traditional Gheéz songs. The young demanded to be accepted with their own expressions. As the discussions about the liturgical language, the age of confirmation and changes in the funeral rite were inconclusive the Synod recommended:

- \* To go on with current practise for the time being
- \* To thoroughly study all necessary adaptations.

#### THE MODERN MEDIA CULTURE

Compared to other AMECEA countries the availability of information is still quite limited. The options are a dozen weekly papers that must be careful not to be too critical of the status quo and only one state-run T.V. channel that is free from the excesses of pornography and violence. But change is underfoot. Eritrea will be connected to the Internet and some of the Service Providers are targeting explicitly the youth. Eritrea's youth in towns will have to cope with an avalanche of information that will reinforce a secular mentality. The Church has little to offer to counterbalance the effects. Two Church papers are losing readers in a highly competitive market. The Synod recommended:

- \* To keep up to date and use different new media in a professional way
- \* To use video and other visual aids in evangelising the illiterate part of the population.

#### FORMATION AND PARTICIPATION OF THE LAY PEOPLE

As the present regime does not allow religion to hold an important place in the public arena, effective evangelisation can only be done through the laity. According to Oriental Canon Law lay participation is limited to one third of Synod members. After some initial shyness the representatives of the laity and the youth expressed clearly the changes they expect to see in the Church. To fulfil their role in Church and society, the laity need formation in their faith. And so the Synod decided to:

- \* Set up a diocesan or national catechetical centre

- \* Make the laity council more representative and allow women and youth to participate.

#### SELF-RELIANCE

Like most other Churches in Africa, the Eparchy is still heavily dependent on outside funding. Yet, the example of the Orthodox Church shows that self-reliance is possible. The Synod recommended to actively pursue a policy of self-reliance through

- \* Sensitising all Church members of their responsibility to support their Church
- \* A policy of transparency and accountability
- \* Setting up financial committees at diocesan and at parish level.

#### SETTING UP EPARCHY STRUCTURES

Asmara Eparchy so far managed to live with minimal structures. To respond to the new pastoral challenges of the times, the Synod

recommended to set up the structures foreseen in Canon Law and define the functions of:

- \* The Vicar General and the Chancellor and the Deans
- \* The Financial Administrator and the Eparchy Financial Council
- \* The Pastoral Office
- \* The Duties of Priests and Parish Teams and Parish Pastoral Councils
- \* The Place of the Religious in the Eparchy
- \* The Laity Council.

#### JUSTICE AND PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

As in many countries in Africa the Church has invested greatly in education and medical

services. Although the Government has done remarkable achievements in developing the country since independence, it retains from its socialist past some totalitarian tendencies. It requested the Church last year [1999] to hand over all its social institutions, as it had done with all NGOs earlier on, a move only interrupted by the war. In spite of such threats and limitations, the Eritrean Church continues to offer its co-operation with the Government and contributes substantially to the relief efforts of some 350,000 people displaced by the war. The Synod recommended:

- \* To form a Justice and Peace commission
- \* To continue its co-operation with the respective Government ministries.

Picture Above: Women from the Adi-Keyh region



## A SYNOD AS PILGRIMAGE

This first historical Synod of the Eparchy of Asmara took place during the Jubilee Year and so it was decided to give it in the form of a pilgrimage. It started on the day after most popular Marian Feast to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in the hall of the yet unfinished Eparchial centre where the major seminarians expressed the major themes of the Synod in a delightful play. The whole assembly in cars and buses followed a two metre high new image of Our Lady through the streets of Asmara to Decamhare, some forty kilometres out of town, where the working session took place. For the closing session all delegates moved in the early morning through the rugged mountains to the tomb of St. Justin de Jacobis in Hebo to pray to the founding father of the Catholic Church in this region for a successful implementation of the Synod and for peace, which is so desperately needed. During the Mass a message to all the faithful in the diocese was read out to appeal to them to take the implementation of the Synod at heart.

## FROM THE SYNOD MESSAGE

The Synod delegates address a message to Catholics in the Eparchy and all people of goodwill. In it they thank God for allowing the Synod to take place and to be so successful in this precarious situation and remembered those thousand of displaced people from both countries and those in the trenches at the frontier. It summed up the inspiration of the Synod in five points

1. That the youth are the backbone of the Church be given special attention, show creativity and participation and yet stay true to the faith of their Foreparents.
2. That the laity participate fully in the liturgy and in the administrative structures of the Church and contribute to self-reliance.
3. That the participation of women be strengthened and that they be given a space in the liturgy.
4. That priests and religious increase the contribution to the pastoral work in the Eparchy.
5. That all may pray and work for Peace. <sup>(6)</sup>

central highlands, the coastal region, and the western lowlands.

**The highlands:** are densely populated and intensively cultivated. The hottest month here is May (85°F. [29.4°C.]) and the coldest December-February (32°F. [0°C.]). The highest and lowest temperatures in a day can vary by 33°F. (18°C.). There are two rainy seasons March-April and June-September with up to 24 ins. (61 cm.) rain annually.

**The eastern slope and coastal region:** is hot, dry desert, or semi-desert, with a fertile agricultural area around Ghinda (in the central part). The people along the coastal region are pastoralists. The hottest months are June-August with temperatures between 72°F. (22.2°C.) to 105°F. (40.6°C.). December-February are the coldest months with temperatures between 65°F. (18.3°C.) to 90°F. (32.2°C.). The rainy season on the coastal plain is December-March, but it does not often rain on the southern coast.

**The western lowlands:** are from Keren to the Sudanese border (south-west).

It is a semi-arid with just the two seasonal river systems of the Barka and the Gash. The temperature can reach 105°F. (40.6°C.) in April-June and can drop to 55°F. (12.8°C.) in December. The highest and lowest temperatures in a day can vary by 38°F. (21°C.). There are two rainy seasons March-April and (heaviest) June-September - [see the map on page 13](#), for a simple outline of the major towns, rivers and region.

**ENVIRONMENT:** The problems have been made worse by the decades of war and the many recurrent severe droughts. They include deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, and overgrazing.

## Eritrea - Some Facts and Figures

*Compiled by Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.*

### THE COUNTRY

**NAME:** Hagere Ertra, The State of Eritrea.

**CAPITAL:** Asmara (formerly Asmera).

**MAIN TOWNS:** Asmara (390,000), Massawa (80,000), Assab (Aseb)(25,000) <sup>(1)</sup>

**COUNTRY AREA:** 46,482 sq.mls. (121,320 sq.kms.) including the 354 islands.

**DENSITY:** 28 per sq. km. (0.3861 sq.ml.)

**LAND USE:** arable land: 12%

permanent crops: 1%

permanent pastures: 49%

forests and woodland: 6%

other: 32% <sup>(2)</sup>

Irrigated land: 108 sq.mls. (280 sq.kms.) <sup>(3)</sup>

**COUNTRY BORDERS:** Djibouti (E) 70 mls. (113 kms.), Ethiopia (S) 567 mls. (912 kms.), Sudan (W) 376 mls. (605 kms.)

**COASTLINE:** 1,388 mls. (2,234 kms.) in total; 715 mls. (1,151 kms.) on Red Sea mainland, and 673 mls. (1,083 kms.) on the islands.

**ELEVATION EXTREMES:** the lowest point is unnamed at -515 ft. (-157 m.), the highest point is Soria 9,806 ft. (2,989 m.).

**CLIMATE AND TERRAIN:** Eritrea is mainly an extension of the Ethiopian Highlands and can be divided into three major zones: the

### THE PEOPLE

**POPULATION:** 4,135,933 <sup>(4)</sup> (est. 1 m. in 'exile').

	Total	Urban	Rural
1988	2,956,231	455,2602	500,972
1998	3,879,000	700,547	3,178,453

An estimated 60,000 children were disabled and 45,000 orphaned as a result of the war. UN sources reported that as a result of the recent border dispute/war with Ethiopia 1.3 million Eritreans were displaced from their homes. Of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) it was estimated that about 25% were women and 65-70% were children. After three years of drought food was a problem with 600,000 people at risk of famine. <sup>(4)</sup>



<sup>(6)</sup> This article is from ADS 5/2000 No: 514, 15th. March, 2000. AMECEA Documentation Service (ADS), P.O. Box 21400, Nairobi, Kenya. Reproduction authorised with the usual acknowledgement. You can access ADS on the Internet at: <http://www.dex-netcom/cc478>

Picture Above: One of the shops in Keren Market



#### AGE STRUCTURE:

1-14 years	1,744,611	44.97%
15-64 years	2,031,425	52.36%
65 and over	103,364	2.65%

People per Physician: 36,000<sup>(5)</sup>

ACCESS TO:	Total	Urban	Rural <sup>(5)</sup>
safe water	22%	60%	8%
sanitation	13%	48%	-

BIRTH RATE: 42.71 births/1,000 population<sup>(6)</sup>

DEATH RATE: 12.3 deaths/1,000 population<sup>(6)</sup>

MORTALITY RATES: 1960 1998 2000

Infant	61	-	72
Under-Five	196	90	136
Life Expectancy	40	51	56

Maternal Mortality Rate: 1,400/100,000 live births<sup>(5)</sup>

#### INFANT HEALTH:

U-5 malnutrition	25% <sup>(7)</sup>
U-5 stunted growth	50% <sup>(8)</sup>
U-5 underweight	44% <sup>(8)</sup>

Daily per capita calorie-intake is estimated at 1,750 Kcals, only 83% of the minimum provided by WFP as emergency food rations.<sup>(8)</sup>

#### U-1 immunization against:

diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis	46%
poliomyelitis	46%
measles	38%
tuberculosis	52%

#### ADULT LITERACY RATE:

1980	1998
18%	38%

#### THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS AND LANGUAGES

**LANGUAGES:** No official language. There are three distinct linguistic families.

**Cushitic** languages are spoken by the Afar, the Beja, and the Saho.

**Semitic** languages are the largest family spoken by the Tigrigna (50%) and Tigré (25%).

**Nilotic** languages are spoken by the Baria and the Kunama (in the lowlands between the Gash and Setit rivers).

English is used in business and for teaching in Secondary Schools and University. Arabic and Tigrigna are the main working languages. The spoken Arabic is Hadrami, Sudanese, and Ta'izzi-Adeni.

#### MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS:

Tigrigna (Tigrinya) [1,900,000] 50%, in the highlands; Tigré and Kunama [140,000] in the western lowlands, 40%; Afar [300,000] 4% in the south; Beja (Bedawi) [120,000] and the Nara [63,000] in the west; Bilen [70,000] around the town of Keren; Nara [63,000] in the west; Saho [144,000] along the Red Sea coast, the eastern highlands, and the south; 3% and Somali.<sup>(9)</sup>

**RELIGIONS:** Muslim 46%, Orthodox 41.76%, Catholic 3.5%, Protestant, and Traditional Religion 8.74%.

#### THE GOVERNMENT

**INDEPENDENCE:** 24th. May, 1993 (from Ethiopia).

**NATIONAL HOLIDAY:** 24th. May, 1993.

**PRESIDENT:** Isaias Aferwerki (elected 8th. June, 1993, with 95% of the vote from the National Assembly).

**CONSTITUTION:** transitional constitution (19th. May, 1993); a new constitution was adopted (23rd. May, 1997) but not implemented.

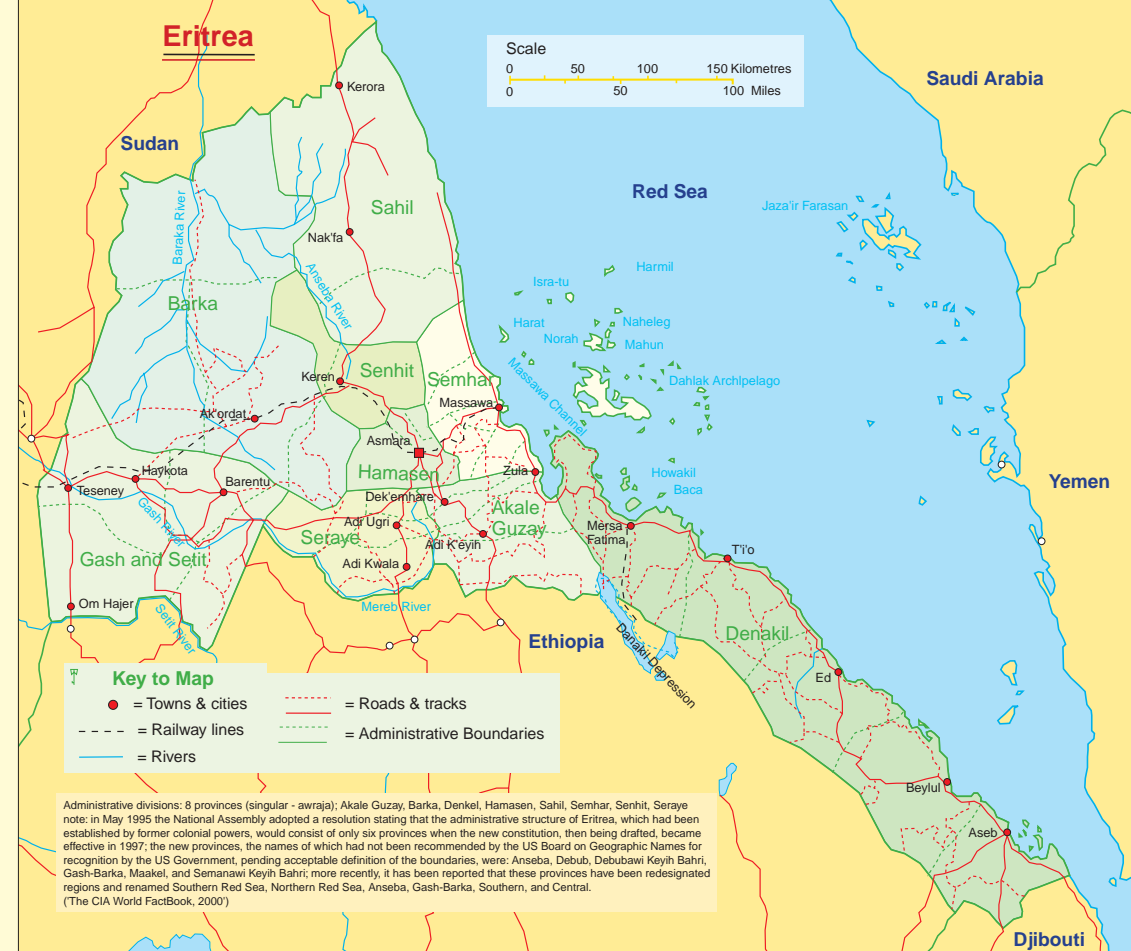
**SUFFRAGE:** 18 years of age; universal.

**TYPE OF GOVERNMENT:** transitional.

**ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS:** 8 provinces - Akale Guzay, Barka, Denkel, Hamasen, Sahil, Semhar, Senhit, Seraye - for further details, and for clarification concerning the provinces, [please see](#) the note at the bottom of the map on the opposite page.

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH:** The President is the Chief of State, and the Head of Government and the State Council is the executive authority.

**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH:** The Transitional National Assembly (150 seats, unicameral). The membership is as follows: 75 from the PFDJ



Central Committee, 60 from the Constituent Assembly, and 15 from Eritreans living abroad.

**JUDICIAL BRANCH:** The Judicial branch is made up of the Supreme Court, 10 provincial courts, and 29 district courts. The legal system is based on transitional laws, revised Ethiopian laws, customary laws, and post independence enacted laws.

**POLITICAL PARTIES AND LEADERS:** the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) (Isaias Aferwerki, Petros Solomon) is the only recognised party. It is the ruling party and was formerly the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

**Political pressure parties/groups and leaders:** Eritrean Islamic Jihad (EIJ); Islamic Militant Group; Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) (Abdullah Muhammed); Eritrean Liberation Front - Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC) (Ahmed Nasser); Eritrean Liberation Front - United Organization (ELF-UO) (Mohammed Said Nawd).

#### INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:

**UN Membership:** 28th. May, 1993.

**EAU Membership:** 24th. May, 1993.

**Other Organisations:** ACP, AfDB, CCC, ECA, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICFTU, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IGAD, ILO, IMF, IMO, Intelsat (nonsignatory user), IOC, ITU, NAM, PCA,

UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO.

### THE ECONOMY

#### GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT:

GDP per capita: \$202 <sup>(10)</sup>

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$2.9 bn. <sup>(11)</sup>

GDP per capita: purchasing power parity - \$750 <sup>(11)</sup>

GDP real growth rate: 6.8% <sup>(10)</sup>, 3% <sup>(11)</sup>

GDP composition by sector:

agriculture: 18%

industry: 20%

services: 62% <sup>(12)</sup>

INFLATION: 9% <sup>(7 & 5)</sup>

GNP: \$165 (1994), \$170 <sup>(10)</sup>

GNP per capita: \$170 <sup>(10)</sup>, \$200

GNP real growth rate: 8% <sup>(13)</sup>

LABOUR FORCE DISTRIBUTION (1990):

Agriculture	1,274,939	80%
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Industry/Services	309,334	20%
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Total Labour	1,584,273	
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INDUSTRIES: food processing, beverages, clothing and textiles.

ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION: 177.6 m. kWh. all produced from fossil fuel and used in local consumption. <sup>(7)</sup>

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: barley, beans, cotton, coffee, fish, fruit, lentils, livestock, maize, millet, pulses, sesame, sisal, sorghum, tobacco, vegetables, wheat.

EXPORTS: \$52.9 m. <sup>(7)</sup> commodities: livestock, sorghum, food, textiles, footwear, household goods, small manufactures.

EXPORTS TO: Ethiopia 64%, Sudan 17%, Italy 5%, Saudi Arabia 2%, US, Yemen <sup>(7)</sup>

IMPORTS: \$489.4 m. <sup>(7)</sup> commodities, processed goods, machinery and transport (37%), petroleum products, basic manufactures.

IMPORTS FROM: Saudi Arabia 16%, Italy 14%, UAE 13%, Ethiopia 9%, Germany 6% <sup>(7)</sup>

EXTERNAL DEBT: \$75 m. (1995) \$76 m. (1997 est.)

#### INTERNATIONAL DEBT <sup>(5)</sup>

Total Debt	Debt per person	% of GDP	% of Exports
\$149,300,000	\$38	0	1

FOREIGN DEBT: \$150 m. <sup>(10)</sup>

TRADE BALANCE: -\$374 m. <sup>(10)</sup>

MILITARY BRANCHES: Army, Navy, Air Force

MILITARY EXPENDITURES: \$196 m. (FY97)

MILITARY EXPENDITURES: 28.6% of GDP (FY97)

ECONOMIC AID: \$123.1 m. <sup>(7)</sup>. 70% of the population rely on aid for all or part of their food supply. Aid from the USA is equal to 30% of the GNP.

CURRENCY: 1 Nafka = 100 cents (first introduced in November, 1997, equivalent to the Ethiopian Birr).

NATURAL RESOURCES: copper, fish, gold, potash, salt, zinc, possibly oil and natural gas.

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### MAIN TELEPHONE LINES

Telephones: 23,578 <sup>(8)</sup>

Per 100 inhabitants: 0.9 <sup>(10)</sup>

Households: 736,000 <sup>(10)</sup>

Residential main lines: 11,400 <sup>(10)</sup>

Per 100 households: 1.5 <sup>(10)</sup>

Main lines per 100 inhabitants: 0.5 <sup>(10)</sup>

Waiting list for telephones: 40,000, >10 years <sup>(10)</sup>

RADIO STATIONS: AM 2, FM 1, shortwave 2 <sup>(8)</sup>

RADIO SETS: 345,000 <sup>(7)</sup>

TELEVISION STATIONS: 1 <sup>(8)</sup>

TELEVISION SETS: 1,000 <sup>(7)</sup>

### TRANSPORTATION

RAILWAYS: total of 197 mls. (317 kms.) narrow gauge. The railway lines from Ak'ordat and Asmara to Massawa have been out of action since 1978. In 1994 three miles (5 kms.) were reopened in Massawa port and the remainder is being repaired at present. <sup>(15)</sup>

ROADS: total: 2,492 mls. (4,010 kms.)

paved: 543 mls. (874 kms.)

unpaved: 1,949 mls. (3,136 kms.) <sup>(13)</sup>

MAIN PORTS: Assab (Aseb), Massawa (Mits'iwa)

AIRPORTS: 21 <sup>(11)</sup>

3 with paved runways:

over 3,332 yds. (3,047 m.): 2

2,666 to 3,332 yds. (2,438 to 3,047 m.): 1 <sup>(11)</sup>

18 with unpaved runways:

over 3,332 yds. (3,047 m.): 2

2,666 to 3,332 yds. (2,438 to 3,047 m.): 2

1,667 to 2,665 yds. (1,524 to 2,437 m.): 6

999 to 1,666 yds. (914 to 1,523 m.): 6

under 999 yds. (914 m.): 2 <sup>(11)</sup>

International Airport: Asmara-Johannes IV <sup>(11)</sup>

AIRLINES SERVING: Egyptair, Saudia, Yemenia <sup>(11)</sup>

Foot Notes: (1) Populations in 1996; (2) 1998 est.; (3) 1993 est.; (4) July 2000; (5) 1998; (6) 2000 est.; (7) 1997; (8) 2000; (9) The population figures in square brackets, e.g. [120,000], are from Ethnologue; (10) 1996; (11) 1999 est.; (12) 1995 est.; (13) 1996 est.; (14) 1997 est.; (15) 1999.

Abbreviations used: °C. = Centigrade; °f. = Fahrenheit; \$ = US\$; bn. = billion; cm/cms. = centimetres; est. = estimate; ft. = feet; FY = financial year; in/ins. = inches; km/kms. = Kilometres; m. = metres or millions (according to context); ml/mls. = Statute Miles; sq. = square; U-1 = under one year old; U-5 = under five years old; yds. = yards.

Sources: AMECEA documents; Africa Review; New African YearBook; UN and UNHCR sources; 'CIA - 'The World Factbook 2000' on Eritrea at <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/er.html>; SuttonLink's Fact Sheet on Eritrea [http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/er\\_fct.html](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/er_fct.html); Catholic Missionary Union's Fact Sheet on Eritrea [http://www.cmu.org.uk/stats/aff\\_eri.htm](http://www.cmu.org.uk/stats/aff_eri.htm); Ethnologue Eritrea Page <http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/countries/erit.html>; HealthNet web site <http://www.healthnet.org/index.html>; World Health Organization (WHO) <http://www.who.ch/eha/>; The U.S. Committee for Refugees <http://www.refugees.org/world/countryindex/eritrea.htm>; Asmarino web site <http://denbe.asmarino.com/>.

Picture Above: Taking a rest at a water source in the Mendefera region



# Ten Days in Algeria

By Sr. Marie McDonald W.S.

True to our origins, the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa have always given particular attention to the believers of Islam. We try to promote an attitude of openness between Christians and Muslims so that through growth in brotherhood, God's Kingdom may come. Cf. Constitutions No. 18.

The following extracts from the diary of Sister Marie McDonald, the Superior General of the White Sisters (MSOLA), show that the Congregation is not wanting in its fidelity to the land where it was born.

**March 11** - Journey from Rome to Algiers. To our Provincial House which has a magnificent view over the Bay of Algiers.

**March 12** - Early departure with Sr. Monique de la Chevrelie for the airport to take the plane to El Golea - or El Menia as it is now

called. Sr. Gloria Martinez Gil, Assistant Provincial, who has spent most of her missionary life in El Menia, knows nearly everyone waiting at the airport!

We fly over a great expanse of desert. It is immense, desolate impressive. We land on the edge of the oasis of El Menia at 8.30 a.m.

An army plane has just arrived before us and we see a large number of soldiers getting on to lorries. There is a leisurely atmosphere here. Many women are veiled in white with only one eye showing. There are also younger women and girls with coloured veils and some with none. After a brief visit to our house, we have to go to the police. This takes time. It is a social call. The friendly policeman is not at all sure that we can leave by road for Timimoun on Tuesday. It is the Commanding

Officer who must decide. We may need an escort, and this will probably be impossible the day before 'Aïd (pronounced Aeed) El Adha' (the great Muslim festival in honour of Abraham's sacrifice). He seems quite intrigued by my passport. "We don't see many of this kind", he tells us.

Visit to the little school run by Sr. Christiane Baulieu for handicapped children. There are eight of them today, but she has other groups on different days. All together they number 30. These

children all look happy and are proud to show us their paintings and exercise books. Two are deaf and dumb and their families thought they were also mentally handicapped, but Sr. Christiane discovered that they are highly intelligent. She explained that there are many handicapped children.

Visit the sewing class given by two other Sisters to young unmarried women who come to learn in small groups. There are about thirty of them also.

Sr. Cécile Henry has written a paper on her work with women since the early sixties. It is a fascinating story of friendship, co-operation and reciprocity. The women knew their traditional patterns and the art of weaving. They taught the Sisters. The Sisters in turn helped the women to invent new patterns and to bond together in co-operatives to market their crafts. Through our Sisters the women have gained much in self-esteem as well as in friendship and solidarity with the Sisters and with one another.

Visit to Biida, a 93 year old woman who remembers many of our early Sisters by name. She described how, as a child, she had seen the first Sisters arriving on camels. They had left Ghardia six days before. I sat beside her on her bed and she held my hand. She cannot see much anymore. We saw photographs of her with a very young-looking Sr. Attale whom she loves very much. I was specially interested because I had met Sr. Attale in Toulouse, now herself an old woman of 91.

**March 13** - Fr. Leclerc, an elderly Missionary of Africa, comes for Mass. In traditional White Father costume he looks very much like an Arab.

At 8.15 he takes Monique and me to visit the shrine of St. Joseph near the tomb of Charles de Foucauld. The Little Sisters of Charles de

Foucauld used to have a community here, but they left in 1977.

We see how the desert is advancing and slowly covering the tombs. Three of our Sisters are buried here. Many tourists used to come here but not since the country became so dangerous.

Fr. Leclerc then took us to visit a museum which he has created almost single-handed. It shows how this desert used to be a fertile region and before that it was under the sea (600 million years ago). We saw lots of fossils: fish, shells,



the hip-bone of a dinosaur that had been wounded by a crocodile. There were tools too.

We go back home to learn that the road to Ghardia is blocked. We used to have a community in Ghardia but we left in a hurry after an attack on the White Fathers' house by armed masked men. Fortunately they made a noise breaking open the front door and the Fathers escaped by jumping from roof to roof.

Visit to Mr. and Mrs. Aboulkaum, where Sr. Annemie Hens (one of our younger Sisters, below and opposite, who has just recently arrived in Algeria) is supposed to go for Arab practice. She also wants to learn weaving. The lady knows many of our Sisters. She was taught by them in primary school, then in a Domestic Science school. Later she worked with our Sisters.

The house is being arranged and there is a room for several looms. It will be a little school for young girls to learn weaving.

**March 14** - After Mass and breakfast we go with our luggage to the police. Our police officer is not there, so we wait. Eventually he comes but still cannot tell us anything. He tells us to wait in the car. At 9.15 he comes to tell us that we can take the minibus that leaves at 9.30. So we go to get out tickets and wait again. At 11.30 we leave. All the passengers, except Monique and me, are men dressed in traditional Arab costume. The radio is blasting forth in Arabic. I wonder what he can be shouting. Monique, who understands Arabic, told me he was calling for repentance and mercy to get ready for the coming festival, 'Aïd El Adha'.

For most of the journey we are entirely alone on the road. We would have been easy game for any attack. However all is well as we continue on our monotonous journey through 400 plus kilometres of sand. We even doze a bit from time to time. Eventually we see the green trees of Timimoun. How beautifully welcoming they seem! It is 16.40 and we are tired, dusty, hungry and especially thirsty. When the minibus drops us off we see a large sign advertising a phone; so we ring our Sisters and one of them comes to fetch us.

Our Sisters live in a small reddish-coloured house in a street where we walk on the sand. There is just enough space for three Sisters. The 'chapel' is a corner of Sr. Magdalena's bedroom. Monique and I share the sitting room for the two nights we sleep here.

The very evening we arrive a policeman comes to register my presence in the town. He needs to know the names of my father and mother as well as the date of my birth, passport number etc. Later I get a phone call to check exactly on which day I arrived in Algeria.

Monique and I go to visit the neighbours who welcome us warmly and serve tea-cakes and biscuits. They are a friendly family from Oran who moved to Timimoun with their three delightful little girls because it is more peaceful here. In the evening we go to see the 'sights' of Timimoun: the cemetery, the Marabout (shrine of a holy man), the sand dunes and the palm woods and gardens. We notice a fascinating system of irrigating the gardens in a way that each one gets their share of water.

**March 16** - We wake up to the sound of sheep being slaughtered. This is part of the 'Aïd El Adha' celebrations. The men kill the sheep and then the women prepare and cook it. Our neighbours come to greet us before going off to celebrate the festival with other families, all wearing their best clothes.

To the airport to take the plane for Oran, which is right on the coast. Good journey over the desert. Arrive early.

In the afternoon we visit the library where Sr. Danuta Kmiecik, who has recently arrived, is in charge. She is busy and has many plans. About 300 students use this library, which is a great help to them in their studies. Of course they come to borrow books, but also to talk with Danuta and share their problems. It has



often struck me how often in North Africa the Sisters and Fathers work in libraries. They are a means of providing a real service to young people and are a way of forming relationships which often lead to real friendships that can promote greater understanding and tolerance between Christians and Muslims.

In the same apartment 100 women come to learn all kinds of skills, such as sewing, embroidery etc. from Sr. Marguerite Tortel. They too come to her about their problems.

The Sisters say that Oran is really quiet and the people friendly and open. However, the 'Fundamentalists' who have been pardoned recently are strutting around very visibly and proudly.

**March 17** - Sr. Marguerite Tortel (78 years old) talks about her life. She was born in Algeria and grew up there. She is a bright-eyed little woman, brimful of ideas and full of energy and dynamism. She tells me that everything is deteriorating, health service, education ... She is rather pessimistic about the future; she says the President is trying but can't do much.

We went to the Diocesan Centre for the Eucharist. I was very struck by the armed guards at both ends of the building. They reminded me that, although everything seems quiet and normal, there is still fear of terrorism.

We met Bishop Georger who showed us where his predecessor, Pierre Claverie, and his young driver, had been killed by a bomb in 1996. Many people come every day to pray at his tomb.

At one moment there is a great commotion on the steps outside. Sr. Agnes comes in and tells us that as she was going downstairs to put out the dustbin, a man who had been watching TV, announced that the Pope had asked pardon for all the offences the Church had committed in 2000 years. The man was very impressed and, at the top of his voice, was shouting to the little group gathered around him, "This is religion. Religion is love!"

**March 21** - Visit to the White Fathers' library. Departure for Algiers. We are all invited to lunch at the Nunciature by the Nuncio who is a Ugandan. We were given a tour of the Basilica of Our Lady of Africa. There is a big statue of Cardinal Lavignerie, our Founder, overlooking the bay. I also prayed on the tomb of Mother Salome, our first Superior General.

There is an enormous difference between the atmosphere in Algeria the last time I was here (1995) and now. For one thing, the police are no longer wearing balaclavers, with slits for the eyes, which made such a fearful impression on me last time. Also there is great friendliness towards visitors everywhere (at least that was my experience.) The Sisters seem less tense and feel freer to go out normally for shopping etc. However there are worries about the future which remain a big question mark. And yet there is hope and life goes on.

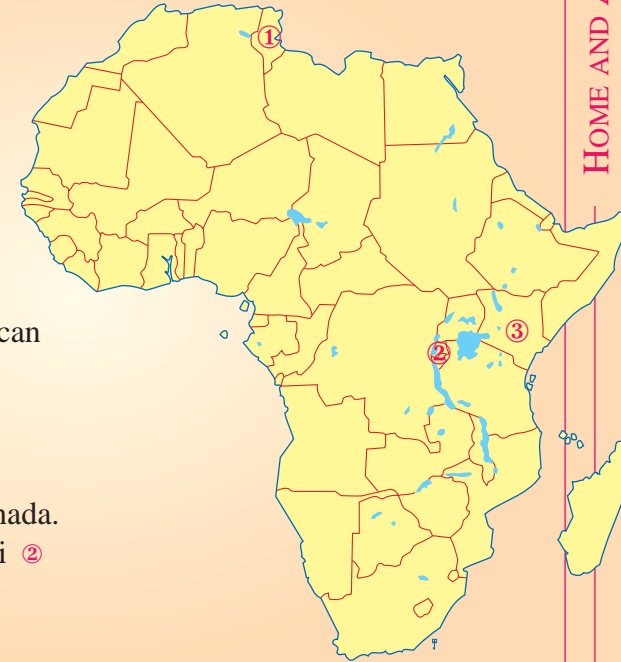
# MISSIONARY MOVEMENTS

## ARRIVALS

- Sr. Monique de la Chevreliere from Tunisia ①
- Sr. Nicole Gregoire from African tour.

## DEPARTURES

- Sr. Jacqueline Rondeau to Canada.
- Sr. Leocardie Kana to Burundi ②
- Sr. Vivien Mary to Kenya ③



HOME AND AWAY

## Change of Address

If you are about to move, or have moved, and would still like to receive the magazine please fill in the form below and return it to:  
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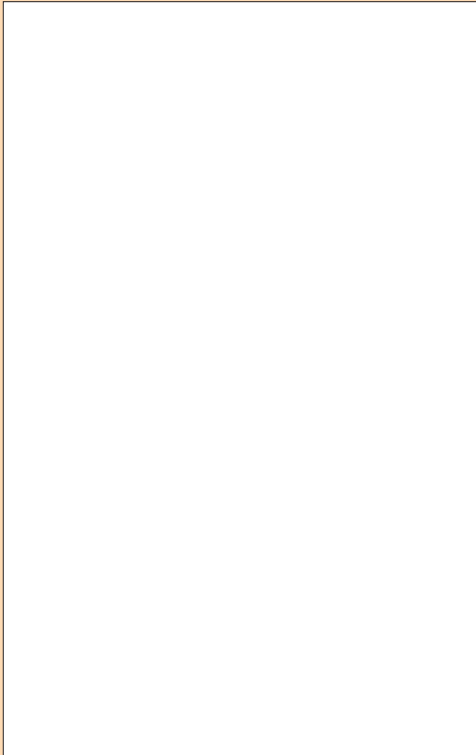
## FATHER GEORGE SMITH



writes about the first Sunday which he spent in a new Parish.

I was assigned to parish work in Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Nairobi last year. The 6th. August, Feast of the Transfiguration, was my first Sunday in my new parish. Innocently, I accepted to take the 9.30 a.m. Mass in the main church: it was only on the very morning itself that I realised that the Mass was in Swahili. So, I had to throw away my carefully crafted English homily and launch into a sermon full of rusty Swahili. My first challenge was to find a Swahili rendition of 'transfiguration'! Somehow, I managed to stumble my way through.

Throughout the morning it was interesting to mingle with the crowds entering and leaving



the church we have an abundance of Masses on Sundays. We receive help from our own confreres to cover all these Masses: they come from our nearby Formation House and from our house in Ngong Road. We also had no fewer than three Yarumal Fathers helping that morning: they are a missionary congregation from Colombia. I mentioned to them that I have a Colombian connection: my nephew is married to a lass from their country.

In the afternoon I went to visit part of the Parish where things are not so nicely organised as proceedings at our main church. I was confronted with poverty in the raw - the plight of the underprivileged - the sheer awfulness of the 'have-nots' of our world. Yet, there was a dignity, a holiness, a presence of the Lord there that was tangible. The area I visited is called 'Mitumba' - a Swahili word for old clothes! It is a kind of no-man's land near the runway of Wilson Airport and bordering on the Nairobi National Park. It has no running water or electricity. The houses are all makeshift structures - amalgams of plastic, cardboard, bits of tin and anything that can help to keep out the cold at night: what happens when it rains is another matter.

We were followed by a ragtag of children as we tried to find our way to where our small Christian Community had planned to meet. There were some goats and a few ducks wandering around. We passed a cross stuck in the ground and were told that this is where the Legio Mariae church prays: this is an independent church which took its origin from the Catholic Legion of Mary. Here and there people were drinking; others were plaiting each others hair; and some even had organised for themselves a sort of basic volleyball game on the edge of the runway.

We held our prayer service outside the dwelling of one of our Christians. There was a mixture of men, woman and children. They sang; they had readings from the Bible; but best of all were their own unique prayers. They acknowledged that sometimes they despaired of God, so many were the trials and tribulations in their lives: but they reaffirmed their faith in God and asked to be sustained in the week ahead. I sat on a stool marvelling at the continuing faith of the poor of Yahweh; struck by the contrast between the minimum of control which they had over their lives; and the proximity of far more fortunate people exemplified by the executive jets which frequently passed over

## A CRY FROM CONGOLESE MOTHERS



The following are extracts from a letter written by the 'Mothers of Congolese Families to World Leaders'. This extraordinary letter reveals something of the

suffering and the courage of the people of East Congo, since their country was invaded.

**'Who is the winner in this blood-bath in South Kivu?'**

**A cry from the heart of mothers.**

'We have seen four years of warfare. Thousands of human lives have been lost, entire families wiped out; the whole fabric of society, both on the side of the killers and of the killed, is undermined. So no one can claim to be the winner; even if some can enrich themselves with gold, diamonds and other precious metals, what is that compared to human life? Yet we see those who sow hatred and reap death. What benefit have they?'

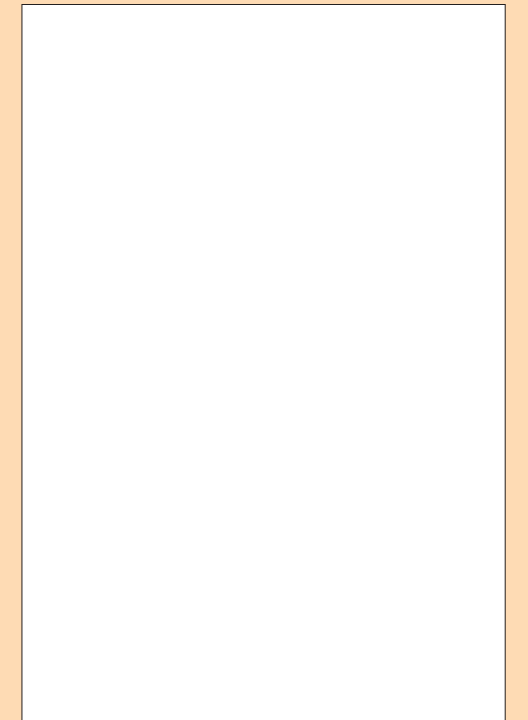
This absurd war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, now two years long, has brought absolutely nothing positive to society. Children have said "No" to this war, adults also. Men

our heads as they landed and took off from the airport.

Afterwards we went to pray over a young woman who was very ill: she lay on a mat outside her simple dwelling. Then as we were walking back to where we had left our car, we visited a house where just that week the mother and one of her daughters had died. Even sadder was the fact that the daughter had been pregnant and this added another dimension of sorrow.

It was a sobering introduction to my new parish. And yet far from making me depressed and longing to go back to a more comfortable situation in Scotland, I felt somehow privileged that these were now my people.

have refused to support this war, so have women. Young people are passionately opposed to it, so are the old. Our Bishops, our pastors have



condemned it. As for those who obstinately carry on the war and encourage it, what have they gained?’

(There follows a list of the names of individuals and groups who have suffered atrocities and the places where these took place. The writers say how their preparations for the Millennium Day for Mothers (25th. March, 2000) had to be stopped, not only because of the general situation of the country, but also because of a systematic attack on the lives of priests.) They ask:-

‘How can men who have no respect for what is most honourable and sacred and who even lay hold of a Bishop (and refuse to allow him back in his diocese), how can they respect us, poor women? What are you trying to get, you men of war, you drinkers of human blood? Why this unending provocation?’

(The last part of the letter is a warning against those trying to stir up ethnic hatred, which although so pronounced in other countries, was little known in the Congo.) In thinly veiled language they say:

‘Someone, somewhere wants to win in the blood-bath taking place among us. He speaks of ethnic hatred, a new genocide, machetes, and he wants to put the blame for all that upon the innocent. The oppressor, gun in hand, pretends he is the victim, though he knows that not one of us is armed. This lie is aimed at those who do not know the barbarity of those who occupy our country. We must not let ourselves be tricked and caught. We must not follow them. We will win by **non-violence** and determination. We must refuse to be manipulated. We must reject ethnic slogans, popular in neighbouring countries, and practices which are contrary to our Congolese and Christian culture, which is imbued with principles of hospitality and solidarity. On the contrary, let us commit ourselves to pursuing the supreme good: **love of God and of our neighbour**. At the same time, let us remain firm, united in our determination to avoid collaborating with evil. Let us give good advice to our husbands and sons. We must not give food to the killers, not a cent, either in the market place or anywhere else. And above all let us pray for them that they may be converted.’

‘Those who occupy our country, well-armed as they are, are trying by every form of intimidation to lead us into evil. The time has come to cry out for help before it is too late.

**We call on:**

- the President of the United States
- the Heads of State of the countries of Europe
- the leaders of the United Nations and of the Organization for African Unity

### SISTER JEANNE-MARIE LOHISSE



writes from Kinshasa, capital of the R.D. Congo. Looking back over the Millennium Year 2000, she writes about ‘**The Jubilee of the poor**’.

No magnificent fireworks, no champagne, not much dancing or beer in the pubs or in the streets of our area. How can one celebrate when one has nothing but one’s poverty? And yet, who can boast of having seen in the New Millennium with more genuine and heartfelt joy than the poor of Kinshasa? In all the parishes of the town it had been decided to spend the night of

- the Presidents of the countries in complicity with the war in the Congo
- their puppets in the Congo
- the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo
- all the actors in this absurd war.’

‘**Put an end to war in the Congo.**’

- Given in Bukavu, 28th. February, 2000. -
- The women of South Kivu. -
- Sixty-five signatures follow. -

December 1999-2000 in prayer. Here in our parish of St. Gabriel, the church was already packed at 8 p.m. - not a place left on any bench, nor even in the aisles, for the prudent had brought their chairs with them. The mothers had spread out ‘sukas’ (large squares of cloth) on the floor, where babies and young children were fast asleep, in spite of the noise, their little hands curled into fists. One really had to watch one’s step!

Outside, all around the church, the faithful were crowded in their masses, seated on the few benches, but mostly on the ground. A loud-speaker

enabled them to follow the ceremonies and join in the prayers taking place inside the church.

**How many people were there altogether? 1500 perhaps 2000.**

At 9 p.m., just as the people were about to start the rosary Cardinal Estou arrived. "I've come to say the rosary with you", he said. The crowd were touched and delighted. After the rosary and litany of Our Lady, the Cardinal spoke at length. Then at midnight, he gave the first blessing of the New Millennium.

Then the Eucharistic Celebration began, with singing and dancing. Towards 3 a.m. Mass drew to a close and the people burst into songs of praise and joy. The night ended with an hour of silent adoration. As dawn approached, the parish priest sent the people home, each one with a lighted candle, saying, "Go forth to bring the light to your families and your neighbours. For each and all, be a light".

The light of hope is badly needed here in Kinshasa. It is true that here the enemy is not the military, as it is in Bukavu and other parts of the Congo. The oppressor is poverty. There is almost wholesale unemployment, especially among young people, who end up by not even wanting a job, but who live dependent on their parents, even

## BROTHER TREVOR ROBINSON



Bro. Trevor Robinson W.F. was awarded the M.B.E. last year for his services to the disabled and disadvantaged in Ghana. He received the M.B.E. medal from Her Majesty the Queen on the 19th July, 2000, at Buckingham Palace.

Bro. Trevor acknowledges that this award "is a tribute to all of us, women and men, colleagues and others, who are working for the disadvantaged in Ghana. We just wanted to give these people a sense of dignity and mobility.



when up to 30 or 35 years old. Even those who do have work, such as civil servants and teachers, have to wait indefinitely for their salaries, or are paid a pittance. (I know a young engineer whose monthly salary equals his monthly rent - full stop!)

Many children can no longer go to school. In Kinshasa school attendance used to be 98% of the young. Now it has dropped to 30%. Yet the eagerness for study remains unabated.

It is the mothers who bear the full responsibility of the upkeep of the families: husbands and children, plus all those whom they welcome into their homes, such as AIDS orphans and unwanted children. They live from hand to mouth on the few vegetables they can grow on the verges of roads and on a little cassava flour. Many families eat only every other day or else in turns, the father and older children on one day, the mother and the little ones on the next.

**Is the picture I have drawn too gloomy?**

In the sky, dozens of small stars shine out bravely: a welcome, a sharing, just being there for others in trouble, times of intense prayer nourished by ardent faith. These are the little stars which keep hope alive in our hearts.

It is not necessary for them to spend the rest of their lives crawling along the ground; we want to help them hold their heads up high."

Bro. Trevor was born in Preston and brought up in Horsforth, Leeds from where he joined the White Fathers. He has worked in Ghana for thirty-two years and began his service as a mechanic in Wa Diocese. For a number of years he has acted as the Honorary Consul of the British High Commission in the Northern Region of Ghana. While at Wa he trained many young men to become mechanics. Since

1992 he has been working in Tamale Diocese where he has addressed himself more to the need of the disadvantaged.

Bro. Trevor has used his expertise to train a team of young men to make wheelchair tricy-

cles. During that time they have constructed more than two hundred of these tricycles. A young Muslim man thanked Bro. Trevor for his tricycle saying "now I will be able to go to the mosque every Friday and there I will pray for you."



## THE PELICANS

**The Pelicans** - the Association of ex-White Father students that was formed in 1992 - now has a thriving website which many Readers may find interesting. The URL address is <http://www.thepelicans.co.uk>. Within just a couple of months of its launch the site is developing into a substantial repository of articles, photos, news cuttings and other memorabilia supplied by the members. It also includes a

copy of Eugene MacBride's regular Newsletter (and back issues), along with the means of contacting other members of this expanding Association.

**Note:** You can also access the Pelicans' website via the White Fathers' G.B. website with the link on page:

[http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/wf\\_pg.html](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk/wf_pg.html)

*Bro. Trevor, centre, Fr. Diarmud Sheehan W.F. on the left and Roger, Trevor's brother, is on the right  
The photograph is by Charles Green*



# Let Us Pray

*For the following who have died recently:*

Mr Arthur Ainge, 18 Winterton Court, London.  
 Mr James Anderson, 41 Rhinds Street, Coatbridge.  
 Mrs Joan Bell, 12 Mell Road, Maldon, Essex.  
 Miss Violet Blackman, 225 Brixton Hill, London.  
 Mrs Constance Mary Boland, 25 Lime Street, Southport, Merseyside.  
 Mrs Joan Bramwell.  
 Mrs Rosaleen Brown, 42 Harewood Court, Wilbury Road, Hove, East Sussex.  
 Mr Robert Byrne, 55 Gough's Meadow, Camberley, Surrey.  
 Mr F J Cross, Benridge, Cavendish Terrace, Carlisle, Cumbria.  
 Mrs Teresa Dudley, 373 Revidge Road, Blackburn, Lancs.  
 Miss Margaret Evans, 20 Barbrook Way, Walton, Liverpool.  
 Mr Thomas Finnigan, 725 Ashton New Road, Manchester.  
 Mrs N Fox, 22 Edward Close, St. Albans, Herts.  
 Mrs Eileen Heakin, 53 Claremont Road, Salford.  
 Mrs V M Horgan, 18 Woodcote Road, Leamington Spa.  
 Mrs Mary Jackson, 7 Green Lane, Litherland, Liverpool.

Mary Elizabeth Johnson, Peterborough.  
 Jimmy Johnston, 14 Ellis Way, Motherwell.  
 Mr Bernard Kakinda, St Bernard's College, Kiswera, Uganda.  
 Mr Norman Edward King, 30 Dial Park Road, Stockport.  
 Mrs Matilda Leneghan, 11 Westbrooke Crescent, Welling, Kent.  
 Mrs Ellen Litherland, 7 Fothergill Street, Warrington, Cheshire.  
 Mrs L Locke, 33 Holly Road, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorks.  
 Mrs Dorothy Lucas, 7 The Grange, Lower Park Road, Braunton, Devon.  
 Mr Michael McArdle.  
 Stephen McAtear, 43 Bellsmyre Avenue, Bellsmyre, Dunbartonshire.  
 Mrs Margaret McComish, 128 Alexandra Road, Burton on Trent.  
 Mrs Yvonne McGorry, 10 Helensea Court, Dumbarton.  
 Mr Maloney, 5 Black Road, Hebburn, Tyne & Wear.  
 Mr Bernard Mangley, 4 Sandheys Drive, Southport, Merseyside.  
 Mr Aidan O'Neill, 4 Roggel Road, Canvey Island, Essex.  
 Mrs Ellen O'Neill, 10 Jubilee Crescent, Whitwell, Worksop, Notts.

Mr Norman Owen, 13 Wolsey Drive, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey.  
 Mr Brian Robson, 28 Ted Fletcher Court, Darlington, Co.Durham.  
 Mrs Sheila Scoular, 9 Preston Park, Linlithgow, West Lothian.  
 Mr Sharp, 32 Darenth Road, Welling, Kent.  
 Mrs M T Singleton, 18 Hornminster Glen, Hornchurch, Essex.  
 Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus Order - European Province.  
 Mrs Mary Skwarnecki.  
 Mr James Smith, 141 Bonkle Road, Newmains, Lanarkshire.  
 Mr Robert Smith, 23 Northcote Road, Wallasey. (brother of Agnes Morris and Maise Buckels).  
 Mrs J Taylor, 20 Manor Farm Road, St Neots, Huntingdon.  
 Mr John Tiernan, 37 Buckingham Road, Chorlton Cum Hardy, Manchester.  
 Maria Do Thi Tin, Vietnam. (mother of Father Tran Vincent W.F.)  
 Mrs Olive Treen, 30 Platt Lane, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.  
 Mrs Molly Valentine, Rosslyn Nursing Home, 2 Hoscot Park, West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside.  
 Mr John Webb, Cottfield, Strangford, Ross on Wye, Herefordshire.  
 Mr Reginald Horace Woollacott, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

## † THE OBITUARY LISTS †

Please note that the latest dates for receiving names to include in the Obituary List are as follows:

Issue No.	Months	Latest Date
357	April-May 2001	18th. January, 2001
358	June-July 2001	18th. March, 2001
359	Aug.-Sept. 2001	18th. May, 2001
360	Oct.-Nov. 2001	18th. July, 2001
361	Dec.-Jan. 2002	18th. September, 2001
362	Feb.-March 2002	18th. November, 2001

*"Come, you whom my Father has blessed,  
 take for your heritage  
 the kingdom prepared for you  
 since the foundation of the world". (Mt. 25.34)*

**May they rest in peace**

# St. Anthony's Burse

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